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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 84/NO. 43 NOVEMBER 2, 2020

INSIDE

Quebec meeting celebrates fight against 1970 War Measures Act

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Nigeria rulers face growing protests against brutal cop units

BY JANET POST

Tens of thousands of workers and youth have protested against police brutality in more than 100 cities across Nigeria since Oct. 8. From Lagos to rural areas, demonstrators are demanding that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad of the Nigerian cops be disbanded. On Oct. 17, 10,000 people marched in Abuja, the capital, despite a government COVID-19-justified ban on protests there.

As we go to press, reports from demonstrators in Lagos say several protesters have been killed and many injured the night of Oct. 20 after cops brutally attacked the central rallying point at the Lekki toll gate. Demonstrators had been seated on the ground waving Nigerian flags and singing the national anthem.

Amnesty International documented 82 cases of torture, killings, extortion and rape by SARS between January 2017 and May 2020, including "mock execution, beatings, waterboarding, and near-asphyxiation." Dressed in plainclothes and armed with heavy weapons, these cop thugs set up

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Vote Socialist Workers Party! Expand reach of 'Militant'

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — "Over the next 16 days the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket and its 23 other candidates will boldly present a revolutionary working-class platform as we reach out to workers and other exploited producers," Alyson Kennedy, the party's candidate for president, told the Militant Labor Forum here Oct. 17.

"We propose immediate demands to defend and advance the struggles of working people as the economic and social crisis of capitalism wreaks havoc with our lives," she said.

Along with the campaign running up to the Nov. 3 elections, SWP members are carrying out an eight-week drive to expand the readership of the *Militant* and books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders. This effort — joined by the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom — will run until Nov. 24. The Socialist Workers Party also has launched its annual Party-Building Fund to collect $120,000.

"Joe Biden says he will rebuild the

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Workers need our own party, a labor party!

Courtesy Susannah Evangelista, Kaiser Wailuku Medical Office

UNITE HERE Local 5 and Hawaii Nurses and Healthcare Professionals workers at Kaiser Wailuku in Hawaii rally in mid-October, protest boss plans to close departments, cut workers.

For a shorter workweek with *no cut in pay* to stop layoffs

This statement was released by Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy Oct. 22.

The pressing need for working people to join together to fight the impact of an unprecedented economic and social

Continued on page 9

Bosses drive to make workers pay for crisis of capitalism

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Whichever capitalist political party wins the presidency Nov. 3 — the Democrats with Joseph Biden or Republicans with Donald Trump — tens of millions of workers are going to face the same deep economic, and moral crisis the day after the election.

Neither puts forward a program to advance the interests of the working class, which faces rising joblessness, higher prices, and a health industry organized for the profits of the owners of hospitals and insurance companies, not to provide medical care as a coronavirus second wave spreads in the U.S.

What's involved is a drive by the bosses to solve their profits crisis off workers' backs.

"Only the Socialist Workers Party campaign starts from what working people need, not what the bosses and their Democratic and Republican parties say is 'realistic,'" Alyson Kennedy, the SWP's candidate for president, said Oct. 20. "At the center of our campaign is the need to fight for workers to have jobs, to

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Determination to bring down regime fuels months of protests in Belarus

Tut.by

Retirees at Minsk, Belarus, Oct. 19 "March of Wisdom" demand resignation of dictator Alexander Lukashenko. They chant, "Our will cannot be broken" and "We can! We will win!"

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Despite a threat by the government to use live ammunition against demonstrators, some 50,000 marched in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, Oct. 18. Many thousands more rallied in cities across the country demanding President Alexander Lukashenko step down, and in support of calls by bourgeois opposition leaders for a general strike.

Weekly Sunday demonstrations of tens of thousands of workers and others determined to be rid of the dictatorial regime have taken place since Lukashenko declared himself the winner in blatantly rigged presidential elections Aug. 9.

Protesters on the Minsk march

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Fall Campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books

Sept. 26 - Nov. 24 (week three)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	70	32	70	25
Atlanta	70	27	70	22
Chicago	110	45	110	33
Dallas	30	19	30	8
Lincoln	12	6	12	7
Los Angeles	90	36	90	34
Louisville	80	38	80	35
Miami	25	14	25	8
New Jersey	70	29	70	30
New York	85	52	85	43
Oakland	85	38	85	42
Philadelphia	25	15	25	12
Pittsburgh	40	23	40	8
Seattle	85	26	85	25
Twin Cities	25	10	25	12
Washington	60	27	55	29
Total U.S.	962	437	957	373
Prisoners	25	15		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	40	20	40	16
Manchester	35	15	35	8
Total U.K.	75	35	75	24
Canada	85	28	85	30
New Zealand	25	12	25	8
Australia	25	10	25	4
Total	**1,197**	**537**	**1,167**	**439**
SHOULD BE	**1,200**	**456**	**1,200**	**456**

Inside

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Colombia miners strike over coal boss concession demands 6

–On the picket line, p. 3–

After bitter 9-month strike Asarco miners keep up fight

Dominion grocery strikers expand picketing, seek support

UK bosses go after workers while London-EU talks stall

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — With the U.K.'s "transition" out of the European Union's trading arrangements ending Dec. 31, talks between London and EU leaders in Brussels over a post-Brexit trade deal have hit the rocks.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson blames Brussels. The U.K. will leave the EU's trade rules with "high hearts and complete confidence," he said Oct. 16. But his optimism masks the reality facing both Britain's capitalist rulers, as well as working people, for different reasons.

The rulers seek to carve out new trade arrangements worldwide that best reflect the interests of the declining imperialist power. Working people face the government's refusal to offer any protection from a deepening economic crisis, marked by job cuts, declining real wages, and the government's inability to stem the coronavirus pandemic as it worsens health care provisions.

Some 700,000 jobs were axed between March and September. The government forecasts unemployment rising to 3.5 million by next year.

Real wages continue to be eroded. The government's furlough scheme at 80% of wages ends Oct. 31, to be replaced at 66% for workers mostly in bars and restaurants forced to close.

Income has also been slashed for the 3 million "self-employed" workers who get no government assistance, and for the rising number of workers on "zero hours" temporary contracts who have had their hours cut.

Government measures in reaction to the pandemic have worked to the detriment of working people, with a nursing homes crisis in which thousands of elderly residents have been left to die in poorly equipped, understaffed, overcrowded facilities.

Under the banner of "protecting the National Health Service," and stopping the spread of the virus, the government has inflicted cuts to cancer screening and delays to treatment, leading to thousands of deaths. Operations that officials call "nonurgent," such as hip, knee and shoulder replacements, have been put on hold. As a result 2 million are on a waiting list of over 18 weeks, triple the figure from August of last year. At the same time, the U.K. has had over 40,000 COVID-19 deaths, the highest in Europe.

Johnson's government, acting for the majority of the capitalist ruling families, hopes to realign the rulers' trade and foreign policy away from the EU and toward Washington. In line with Washington's stance, the U.K. government has moved against Chinese-owned tech giant Huawei and is planning to limit Chinese companies' investments in the U.K. nuclear power industry.

It has struck a trade deal with Tokyo and has introduced legislation to end protectionist food standards to facilitate agreements with the governments of Australia and New Zealand.

Some within the U.K. ruling class are pressing the government for concessions to Brussels to salvage a trade deal with the EU, claiming that Europe remains the British bosses' main market. Millions of workers were part of the majority that voted for the U.K. to quit the EU in 2016, fed up with EU regulations that interfere with their lives, as well as with claims by Conservative, Labour and the other bosses' parties that doing so would be a disaster.

Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Nurses in London demonstrate Aug. 8 demanding pay raise. End of government pandemic benefits Oct. 31 means millions more workers face pay cuts, alongside rising joblessness.

The EU — a protectionist trading bloc that competes against the U.S. rulers — has been weakened as rival member states protect their own conflicting interests in the face of a spreading worldwide capitalist crisis. It has functioned to benefit the German rulers, and to a lesser degree those in France, at the expense of the bloc's weaker rulers. Brexit dealt them and the EU itself an additional blow.

U.K. gov't rift with EU deepens

EU chiefs are demanding access to U.K. coastal waters for French and other fishing companies, as well as demanding that they get to regulate U.K. government subsidies to companies here.

Johnson needs these subsidies to finance his election pledge to "level up" the U.K.'s most deprived regions. This is key to shoring up his Conservative Party's electoral support among former Labour Party voters. The government's use of subsidies to company bosses has escalated during the pandemic. The rulers in Berlin and Paris complain that these handouts give U.K. companies a competitive advantage against their rivals. Such protectionist measures are in fact used by all capitalist governments.

EU negotiator Michel Barnier threatened to ban British food exports to Northern Ireland, a move Johnson called an attempt to break up the U.K., which is under growing strain.

Johnson countered Barnier's threats with a "U.K. Internal Market Bill." It overturns the withdrawal agreement between the U.K. government and the EU, which guaranteed an open border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Johnson seeks to hold Northern Ireland in the U.K. in the face of growing economic ties between it and the Republic of Ireland, which remains in the EU. The division of Ireland was imposed by the British rulers nearly a century ago after an independence war liberated the majority of the country from British colonial domination.

The Scottish National Party, a capitalist party that heads the devolved Scottish government, is leading growing calls for a referendum on Scottish independence.

British bosses have experienced a sharper economic slump over the last six months than their rivals and are pushing this crisis onto working people. The government — despite its big parliamentary majority — is being denounced by both Johnson's opponents and long-term supporters. "I know that people are furious with me and are furious with the government," Johnson said on BBC TV Oct. 4.

Working people, facing rising joblessness, cuts to wages, and deteriorating living and working conditions are looking for ways to defend themselves. It's clearer to many today that the main enemy is London, not Brussels.

THE MILITANT

Fight for cradle-to-grave health care for all!

With callous disregard for elderly and infirm workers, the U.S. rulers have inflicted a deadly toll on nursing home residents — cramming them into overcrowded and understaffed facilities to die alone. The 'Militant' exposes these conditions and calls for extending solidarity.

Natalie Dyer

Nursing home residents in Greeley, Colorado, protest living conditions Oct. 8.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*'s views. These are expressed in editorials.

After bitter 9-month strike, Asarco miners keep up fight

BY ELLIE GARCÍA AND BETSEY STONE

KEARNY, Ariz. — "The fight continues," United Steelworkers Local 5252 President Lyle Murphy told these two *Militant* worker-correspondents when we stopped by the union hall here. We were in Kearny and other area copper towns Sept. 28-29 to talk with miners about what was accomplished during their bitter strike against Asarco bosses and what they face now.

For nine months, from last October to July, copper miners in Arizona and Texas were on strike at Asarco's mines and processing plants, battling the company and its international parent, Grupo Mexico. The bosses were out to crush the miners and their unions, the United Steelworkers, Teamsters and five other unions. During the entire strike Asarco refused to negotiate, demanding the miners accept an insulting "last, best and final" concession contract. The miners ended the strike July 6, with the company still refusing to budge.

Three weeks earlier, the National Labor Relations Board in Phoenix filed a complaint against the company, charging it violated federal labor laws, including failing to bargain in good faith. If the charges are upheld, the company will be required to call back all the union workers. The Steelworkers union has documented the company's failure to reinstate many union miners, while keeping nonunion "replacement" workers in their jobs. Another NLRB complaint based on this information is slated to be tried in January.

Steelworkers locals 5252 and 915 represent miners at the huge Ray Mine that stretches for miles outside Kearny. While some union miners have been rehired there, others, including union officials and strike stalwarts, have not.

Murphy said union representatives need to be working in the mine now to handle safety violations. The company is using supervisors and workers without the needed experience to do training, he said, while refusing to call back experienced union trainers. That's a danger to everyone in the mine.

Solidarity was key

The miners maintained daily pickets here and at the company's two other mines outside of Tucson, Mission and Silver Bell; the smelter and concentrator in nearby Hayden; and at Asarco's refinery in Amarillo, Texas.

They said churches, restaurants and other small businesses in Kearny and other nearby copper towns gave much-appreciated support, donating food boxes, sandwiches, burritos, pizza and more throughout the strike.

"Local 5252 had 14 'crossers' who scabbed," Murphy said. "Right before the strike 5252 union membership was at 98%. When new people were hired, we talked to them about the union, why they should join. We introduced them to shop stewards, invited them to union meetings. We asked other workers to watch for them on job."

The bosses tried to divide the new from longer-term workers by offering some miners wage increases while freezing the wages of two-thirds of the others. But they failed, and the unionists went on strike together, with pickets carrying signs saying, "End inequality at Asarco/Grupo Mexico."

Critical to the battle was the breadth of solidarity the miners received from unions and workers here and across the country, even internationally. They got out the word, sent messages of support, gave donations of food and money, and joined the strikers' picket lines.

Union members at the Union Pacific Railroad refused to take trains into the Mission Mine. When the rail bosses sent an all-management crew to drive into the mine, the rail unionists joined picket lines protesting this. No other train tried to go in after that.

A delegation from United Steelworkers Local 675 in Los Angeles, including Eli Green, Ocean LaRance and other refinery workers, drove to Kearny with $900 raised from plant gate collections. The local voted to give another $2,000.

The Navajo Nation labor federation from the nearby reservation, the largest in the U.S., donated $5,000. International Longshore and Warehouse Union retirees from three different locals in Seattle sent a check for $500. After hearing a report on the strike from a Chicago Walmart worker who visited the picket line, United Steelworkers Local 1010 in Hammond, Indiana, contributed $2,000.

Walmart workers sent cards from Chicago, Los Angeles and a number of other cities. One Walmart worker from San Leandro, California, delivered $100 along with a card signed by 50 workers in English, Filipino and Spanish that said, "Your fight is our fight."

"We also received donations directly from people who heard about the strike from the *Militant*," Murphy said. The paper carried almost weekly coverage of the battle, and urged workers and unions to support it.

'Still getting donations'

"We are still getting donations from United Steelworkers locals across the country," Eduardo Placencio, president of United Steelworkers Local 937, told us when we talked with miners at the union hall in Tucson. Local 937 organizes union miners at the Mission and Silver Bell mines, where the challenge is greater due to the substantial numbers of replacement workers and miners who scabbed in these mines.

United Steelworkers Local 675

Delegation of refinery workers from United Steelworkers Local 675 in Los Angeles County presents donations to Asarco strikers in Arizona last December. Solidarity was key to the strike.

Along with fighting to get union stalwarts back to work, Local 937, like the other Steelworker locals, continues to distribute financial assistance to miners out of work or who've only been able to find low-paying jobs. This includes former strikers from Steelworkers Local 886 at the smelter and concentrator complex in Hayden that the bosses have shut down. They refuse to tell miners when, or even if, it will open up again.

As in Kearny, support from workers and unions in the area was significant. The Pima Area Labor Federation set up a food pantry for strikers from the Mission and Silver Bell mines at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 570 hall in Tucson. The Tucson Education Association donated $500. Machinists union members from Raytheon brought $1,000 in cash and gift cards they collected at work.

Strikers also joined the 1,000-strong Martin Luther King Day protest in Tucson, where organizers invited them to line up in front of the rally.

Seattle rail worker Henry Dennison came to a strike rally Nov. 28 outside Asarco headquarters in Tucson and read a letter from the president of his local, SMART-TD Local 324, and turned over $350 donated for the food bank. Later the local sent another $1,500.

Teachers, nurses, sheet metal, carpenters, Machinists, and airline union members, and Teamster UPS drivers, made donations and walked picket lines. Members of UNITE HERE and the United Food and Commercial Workers union brought lunch for everyone picketing at the Mission Mine when they came to picket alongside the strikers.

On Jan. 27, a labor delegation came from California, including a 52-foot truck full of provisions for the food bank driven by representatives of the Teamsters Joint Council.

In Texas, a Teamster local donated $3,000 to the food pantry of the strikers at the Asarco refinery in Amarillo. Members of Steelworkers Local 13-1 drove over nine hours from Pasadena, Texas, southeast of Houston, to deliver a U-Haul full of supplies to the Amarillo strikers.

International solidarity came from a union representing mining and energy workers in Australia, from bus drivers in New Zealand, as well as from agricultural and oil unions in Colombia. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups there sent solidarity videos in Spanish and English.

Pro-strike signs can still be seen in stores and yards in the area's copper towns. "If you are by yourself against the company, you won't get anything," said Jose Martinez, a 10-year veteran of the Asarco smelter. "We need unions!"

Dominion grocery strikers expand picketing, seek support

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

After more than eight weeks on strike, 100 Dominion grocery chain workers took their picket line to the Loblaw distribution center at the Donovans Industrial Park in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, Oct. 15. This warehouse supplies Loblaw-owned outfits across the Canadian province of Newfoundland, including to Dominion, No Frills, Bidgood Fresh Mart, Cash and Carry St. John's, Your Independent Grocer, and Shoppers Drug Mart.

Loblaw is owned by Galen Weston, one of the richest capitalists in Canada.

The strike by 1,400 Unifor Local 597 members at Dominion is one of the most important labor battles taking place in North America today.

Workers from seven of the 11 Dominion stores in the province returned to picket the facility the next day, stopping trucks from going in and out for a period of time. In a video posted on the Unifor website, national union official Chris MacDonald tells Loblaw to "expect the unexpected" as long as the company refuses to return to the bargaining table.

"We're really serious about this strike," one worker says in the video. "The wages that we're currently receiving are not enough. It's like living paycheck to paycheck hoping I have enough to live. There's no reciprocation that they at all value us as human beings rather than literal numbers and cogs in their machine."

The strike began Aug. 22 after workers overwhelmingly rejected Loblaw's offer of a 1 Canadian dollar an hour wage increase over three years. Workers haven't received a raise since 2018. Eighty percent of the workers are part time, and more than half earn the provincial minimum wage of CA$12.15 an hour ($9.24).

"The workers are asking for a living wage, but ironically it seems that Loblaw is looking to starve out its own employees," Unifor 597 President Carolyn Wrice told the press. "The only way this ends is through fair bargaining." Loblaw bosses say they will not improve the rejected offer and no talks are planned.

Other Loblaw workers who face similar conditions are threatening to strike as well. Workers at a Loblaw warehouse in Moncton, New Brunswick, have already taken a strike vote. MacDonald told VOCM News that the Dominion workers strike has struck a nerve across the whole company, because in July Loblaw bosses, like at the Newfoundland groceries, eliminated an "essential worker" CA$2-an-hour raise extended when the coronavirus outbreak hit.

Dominion workers need solidarity in their fight. Messages of support and donations should be sent to Unifor Local 597, 301-55 Bond St., P.O. Box 922 Station C, St. John's, NL A1C 5L7, Canada, or info@unifor597.ca.

Vote Socialist Workers Party!

Continued from front page

economy," Kennedy said. "But then a week later he said he'll shut down the entire country if the 'experts' tell him that's how to stop the virus." That would add yet more devastation for working people.

"President Trump claims he has produced the most successful economy in the history of the country," Kennedy noted. "Successful for whom? Not for the millions out of work, or for those still holding a job with hourly wages and working conditions under assault by the bosses."

"It's better to vote for what you want and not get it, than vote for what you don't want and get it," Kennedy said. For those who look at both Biden and Trump and can't stomach either, "we ask you to endorse and get active in the SWP campaign."

Pointing to the example of the Cuban Revolution, the SWP presidential candidate said, "Fidel Castro led working people to recognize themselves as actors, not subjects — they are the changers of the world and can accomplish what others deem impossible."

Kennedy and running mate Malcolm Jarrett campaigned here and in northern New Jersey Oct. 13-18, talking to taxi drivers waiting for fares, Walmart workers, construction workers on their lunch breaks, waitresses and other workers on their doorsteps.

The SWP candidates get a serious hearing. They raise the need for workers and our unions to fight for a government-funded public works program to put the unemployed to work at union-scale wages and for unemployment benefits for all those who are without jobs, for as long as needed, whether they have "work" papers or not. Workers everywhere need an escalator clause in their contracts, the SWP campaign says, ensuring that when prices go up, wages go up to match, so workers don't fall further behind.

Workers need a labor party

In Goshen, a rural town surrounded by farms an hour and a half north of New York City, Kennedy knocked on the door of James Roberts, 59. He told Kennedy that he was just laid off from his accounting job after 25 years working for the same company.

"I sat out the 2016 election," he said. "I didn't like Trump or Hillary Clinton. But this time, Trump is so bad, I'm leaning toward Biden, even though I don't find him compelling. Then again, I might just sit it out again."

"Neither capitalist candidate even puts forward a jobs program," Kennedy said.

"I wouldn't expect them to," Roberts said. "It's more of a question of which one do you dislike more."

Kennedy pointed out the party's platform and its demands to create jobs and cut the workweek with no cut in pay.

"It'll never happen," Roberts said.

"It will take a fight," Kennedy said. "And it will take building a labor party that organizes independent of the Democrats and Republicans."

Roberts wasn't convinced, but he asked how he could vote for Kennedy, if he changes his mind.

Campaigners and candidates have also met workers who say they're voting for Trump but take the SWP's campaign literature to learn more about a working-class alternative to the bosses' two parties.

Some workers are affected by the all-out hysteria in the liberal-dominated media that Trump must be defeated at all cost. When Kennedy and Jarrett spoke with taxi drivers outside Penn Station in New York, they met one driver who said, "Third party? Not this year!" He said the SWP would take votes from Biden.

Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Cab driver Abekuya talks with SWP vice presidential candidate Malcolm Jarrett Oct. 15. Uber, Lyft, taxi drivers need to organize a union to fight for higher wages, better conditions, Jarrett says.

But his eyes lit up when he saw that the campaigners had a copy of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara, who led a revolution in Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. Sankara mobilized working people in an uncompromising struggle against hunger, illiteracy, economic backwardness and women's oppression in one of the poorest country's in the world. "We're putting forward a program to organize and mobilize workers and farmers to fight, just as Sankara did," Kennedy said.

The driver bought the book and took a copy of the campaign platform to think about.

Cut hours, not pay!

Union taxi dispatcher Jerome Duncan told Kennedy and Jarrett that he has not worked a full 40-hour week since the start of the pandemic. "They had us on Workshare," Duncan said. "Instead of five days, we worked four and a half or three and a half. Workshare would give you money to make up some of the difference, but not all of it."

The government-funded Workshare program allows bosses to make those they hire eligible for reduced unemployment benefits, when their hours are cut.

But now the Workshare money has run out and the dispatchers are working fewer hours without the additional compensation, Duncan said.

"We're for cutting the workweek with no cut in pay," Kennedy said. The government's Workshare program is just a

Militant/George Chalmers

Gerardo Sánchez, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Texas, with school worker Mary Davis in Sulphur Springs Oct. 10.

Meet the SWP candidates

Oct. 20 - 24
Kennedy - Louisville; Jarrett - Albany

Oct. 27 - Nov. 1
Kennedy - Chicago; Jarrett - Twin Cities

Sat. Oct. 31 Hear Alyson Kennedy
Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: $10 for dinner, $5 for program. 1858 W. Cermak Road, Chicago second floor. Tel.: (312) 792 6160. Sponsored by Militant Labor Forum

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Speaker: Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party Candidate for D.C. Delegate to U.S. Congress. Sat., Oct. 31. Dinner, 6 p.m., program, 7 p.m. Donation: $10. 7603 Georgia Avenue, Suite 300. Tel.: (202) 536-5080. Sponsored by Militant Labor Forum

LOS ANGELES
Speakers: Dennis Richter and Deborah Liatos, SWP candidates for Congress. Sun., Nov. 1, 5 p.m. 2826 S. Vermont Ave., Suite 1. Tel.: (323) 643-4968. Sponsored by Militant Labor Forum.

Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive
Sept. 26-Nov. 24 (Week 3)

Area	Quota	Collected
Albany	$7,500	
Atlanta	$11,000	$1,336
Chicago	$13,000	$3,552
Dallas	$2,750	
Lincoln	$325	$74
Los Angeles	$12,500	$1,725
Louisville	$5,000	$1,548
Miami	$3,750	
New York	$15,500	$1,936
N. New Jersey	$6,000	$1,680
Oakland	$12,750	$4,507
Philadelphia	$3,500	$200
Pittsburgh	$3,000	$1,150
Seattle	$12,500	$2,595
Twin Cities	$4,250	
Wash., DC	$6,000	$2,835
Other		
Total	**$119,325**	**$23,138**
Should Be	**$120,000**	**$45,000**

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

November 6, 1995

NEW YORK — The five-day whirlwind visit by Cuban president Fidel Castro here dominated the news in this city and across the country for nearly a week. It shows vividly the weight of revolutionary Cuba in world politics today — the only country where the working class holds state power with a communist leadership at the helm.

Castro was at the center of attention as he explained that the Cuban people have steadfastly stood "in solidarity with the poor of this earth."

Above all, the event that captured the appeal of the Cuban revolution to many working people — especially Blacks, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos — was the meeting at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. It was Castro's second appearance in Harlem, which he first visited in 1960, shortly after the triumph of the Cuban revolution.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

November 6, 1970

CARBONDALE, Ill. — The United Front for Survival Conference held here Oct. 24- 25 and attended by more than 500 Blacks has established the beginnings of a National Black United Front. It was organized by the Black United Front from Cairo, over 50 miles away.

Cairo is a town of 7,000, half of whom are Black. Over 150 armed attacks have been carried out against its Black community since April 1969 when, in response to previous assaults, Blacks organized the United Front.

The attacks have been the work of police, Illinois state troopers, and a white vigilante group known as "The White Hats," organized by the local state's attorney. The attacks have escalated during the past month.

Conference goers got on buses and joined one of the regular Saturday mass rallies in Cairo to show their solidarity.

THE MILITANT
Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

November 3, 1945

The great majority of the working people of France registered in the general election October 21 that they want to finish with the capitalist system and organize a socialist society. This is the meaning of the landslide for the Socialist and Communist Parties.

The Radical Socialists, who long dominated French politics, have been shattered. This party was neither radical nor socialist. It represented the capitalist class which plunged France into the Second World War. Along with the Radical Socialists the old rightist parties were obliterated as a political force.

None of the parties gained a clear majority. This may open the road for a politician like [Gen. Charles] de Gaulle to become "supreme arbiter," as the *N.Y. Post* puts it. Sharp struggle and profound political crises are indicated in the coming period in France.

Militant/Lisa Potash

Quinton Goolsby, in Macon, Georgia, Oct. 10, tells SWP Senate candidate Rachele Fruit he likes call for breaking from Democrats and Republicans. He subscribed to *Militant*, bought *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

Militant/Joanne Kuniansky

Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for president, right, and Malcolm Jarrett, for vice president, during Oct. 13 interview on Radio Olivier, affiliated with Mount Olive Church of God, in Orange, New Jersey. SWP candidates said Cuban Revolution is example for U.S. workers.

ploy to get workers to accept less pay, while promoting the illusion that "we're all in this together."

"There's tens of millions unemployed," Duncan said. "They need assistance."

"Our party is for immediate and continuing relief for as long as people are out of work," Kennedy said.

"Yes, immediate," Duncan agreed. "This is real talk. If a person can't feed your family, you'll do whatever you have to do."

"We have to rely on ourselves," Kennedy said. "None of the capitalist candidates can do it for us." Our conditions change "when working people stand up and fight, like we did during the civil rights struggle in the 1950s and '60s."

"We need to come together," Duncan said. He exchanged numbers with campaigners to stay in touch.

A few hours later, vice presidential candidate Jarrett spoke with construction workers in nearby Hudson Yards on their lunch break. He told them about his discussions with the cab drivers.

"The bosses use everything they can to divide us," Jarrett said. "But all drivers — yellow cab, Uber, Lyft, and others, whether they own or rent their vehicles — need to organize into one union.

"I agree," said construction worker Elise Charest. Construction workers in New York used to be nearly 100% union. Now it's less than 20% many workers say.

"The situation is very bad," Charest said. "But it's not too late to turn it around. All the different unions have to stick together."

One construction worker got a *Militant* subscription and a number got single copies and took campaign flyers.

On the first day of their New York-New Jersey tour, Kennedy and Jarrett were interviewed by Enoch Faustin and Gerald Charleston on Radio Olivier, an internet radio station affiliated with the predominantly Haitian Mount Olive Church of God in Orange, New Jersey.

The several hour interview covered everything from the fight against police brutality to the example of the Cuban Revolution. When asked what the candidates thought about the Affordable Care Act, Kennedy replied, "It's been a boon for the health insurance companies."

Pointing to the need for working people to fight for the health care we need, Kennedy cited the strike by miners across the country in 1981, when the government tried to cut benefits for miners who contracted the debilitating black lung disease. "Health care should be a right not a privilege," she said.

In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, she said, "the package of drugs that President Trump was given should be made available to everyone, starting with the most vulnerable."

Cuba is an example of what is possible, when working people make a revolution and take power out of the hands of the capitalist class, Kennedy said. "In Cuba the entire population was mobilized to deal with the virus. They have health care, not health insurance."

After the interview, Faustin bought a copy of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon and *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party* by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes.

One indication of the interest in the SWP and its campaign is that as of Oct. 20 supporters of the paper around the world have already sold 537 subscriptions and 439 books, well on the way toward the quota of 1,200 each. In addition $23,138 in fund contributions have come in.

To help campaign, to join the drive to win new readers to the *Militant* and revolutionary books or to contribute to the Party-Building Fund, see page 8 for the party branch nearest you.

Seth Galinsky is the SWP candidate for Congress in the 10th District in New York. Lea Sherman, the party's candidate for U.S. Senate in New Jersey, contributed to this article.

Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign action platform

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY PRESENTS A FIGHTING WORKING-CLASS PROGRAM. WE NEED TO ORGANIZE TO FIGHT GROWING EMPLOYER ATTACKS ON OUR JOBS, WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS. Build solidarity with workers' struggles to organize and defend themselves. On this course, we can build and use union power on our own behalf, and for all those suffering blows by the bosses and their government. One union for all drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft and other app-based and car service drivers!

MILLIONS NEED JOBS TODAY! Our unions need to fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building hospitals, schools, housing, mass transportation and much more that workers need. Fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages to stop layoffs and the effects of runaway prices. Cut the workweek with no cut in pay! For cost-of-living clauses in every contract that raise pay and retirement benefits to offset every rise in prices!

Demand immediate national government unemployment benefits at union scale for *all* those thrown out of work as long as they need it.

WORKERS NEED THEIR OWN PARTY, A LABOR PARTY. For our unions to lead a class break from the parties of the bosses, the Democrats and Republicans. A labor party can organize workers in our millions to fight in our own interest and in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capital. It can chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION. Workers need to fight to wrest control of production out of the hands of the bosses. Employers care about profits, not the dangerous conditions we're forced to work under. This is the only road to take control of and enforce safety and health on the job. Demand the bosses open their books for inspection by workers and consumers. Workers control of production is a school for learning to run the economy ourselves, in the interests of all producers, a crucial step alongside building a labor party to fight to take political power.

FARMERS — WORKERS' ALLIES ON THE LAND. Fight for immediate government relief to fully cover farmers' production costs, including living expenses for themselves and their families. No more foreclosures! Nationalize the land, guaranteeing its use by those who live on and till it, not "repo" seizures by absentee bankers, landowners, or capitalist farmers.

AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions the bosses use to drive down wages. For access to driver's licenses for all.

OPPOSE WASHINGTON'S WARS. US hands off Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. US troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the Middle East. End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

FOR RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL AND OF A CONTIGUOUS PALESTINIAN STATE. The leaders of Arab states, of Israel and Palestinian leaders need to meet and recognize both the state of Israel and an independent Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred and murderous violence.

CUBA'S REVOLUTION — AN EXAMPLE. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation. End the US rulers' economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo.

FIGHT POLICE BRUTALITY! Demand that cops who kill and brutalize people be prosecuted. Fight racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system, with its frame-ups, "plea bargains," onerous bail and "three strike" prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL. Fight for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, and retirement income for all.

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO ABORTION. Defend women's right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

DEFEND POLITICAL RIGHTS. Defend the right to vote, to free speech and assembly and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Defend freedom of worship. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption. No to reactionary "cancel culture" and efforts to shut up people by public lynching through social media.

DEFEND RIGHTS OF PRISONERS. End solitary confinement. End suppression of the *Militant*, books and other newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2020!

Campaign for what you are *for*, not who you're against!

- ❑ **I want to endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president.**
- ❑ I want to join in campaigning or host a house meeting for the candidates. Pleases contact me.
- ❑ Here is my contribution of $_____ to help spread the word. (Make checks to Socialist Workers National Campaign)
- ❑ Send me a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly. ($5 enclosed, checks payable to the *Militant*.)

Send in along with your name, address, phone # and e-mail address to:
Socialist Workers Party 2020 Campaign, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, NY, NY 10018. Tel: 347-871-0282 Email: socialistworkers2020@gmail.com

Colombia miners strike over coal boss concession demands

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hundreds of miners, family members and supporters from indigenous, Afro-Colombian and other groups marched through the streets of Riohacha and several other towns in the Northeast region of Colombia Oct. 9 to support the strike at El Cerrejón open-pit coal mine.

Some 4,600 workers, members of the National Union of Coal Industry Workers (Sintracarbón), went on strike Aug. 31. The mine also employs some 900 nonunion workers on short-term contracts.

Union members voted 96.3% to strike after talks with the company collapsed. Among the issues are wages and company proposals to freeze health and other benefits. "The company wants to freeze the cost-of-living clause that guarantees that wages go up with inflation," Daniel Morón, a heavy equipment operator at the mine and union press secretary, told the *Militant* by phone from Riohacha Oct. 17. Last year inflation on basic food prices rose at 5.8%.

Bosses are also refusing to make any of the short-term contract workers permanent, unlike they agreed to in previous contracts.

One of the biggest issues is the bosses' unilateral decision to impose a new shift schedule, which miners are calling "the death shift."

Miners current schedule involves working 15, 12-hour shifts a month with days off every few days. Bosses now demand the miners work 21, 12-hour shifts in the month, working a grueling seven days in a row before getting time off, with no increase in pay, other than a small differential for the night shift, Morón said. Even if the company offered higher wages, "we're not willing to give up our health and safety for money," he said.

The shift change "is not negotiable," El Cerrejón President Claudia Bejarano told the press, claiming "it's necessary to ensure the survival of the company," citing the drop in world coal prices. "The union is demanding benefits as if there was no coal crisis and COVID-19 affected everyone except Cerrejón," she added.

Some 1,250 permanent workers would lose their jobs, the union says. Bosses claim that "only" 600 to 700 would be laid off.

The job losses would be a big blow, Morón said. "There are not many other jobs in Guajira and it's the department with the largest number of indigenous peoples" in one of the most impoverished regions of the country.

"The company wants to push the economic crisis onto the shoulders of the workers," Morón said. "They want to produce more with fewer workers."

El Cerrejón, one of the largest mines in South America, is jointly owned by three multinational companies, Anglo American, BHP and Glencore.

On Oct. 18, El Cerrejón bosses agreed to negotiate face to face for the first time since Aug. 7.

Messages of solidarity and contributions to the strike fund are needed, Morón said. Send messages to the union at sintracarbon@gmail.com.

Sintracarbón

March supports strike of El Cerrejón open-pit coal miners Oct. 9 in Villanueva, Colombia. Banner says, "No to the death shift," opposing bosses' demand for dangerous work schedule.

Nigeria rulers face growing protests against brutal cops

Continued from front page

roadblocks and checkpoints to extort money. They regularly stop and harass young people — the average age in Nigeria is 18.

Even after Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari announced Oct. 11 that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad would be disbanded, the protests just intensified. Buhari has made this promise before, and says he is now putting together a national SWAT unit, including former SARS cops. That same day authorities ordered all members of this police squad to report to Abuja for "debriefing and psychological examination" in order to re-up.

"I think about 80% of the people, most of them young, were attending protests for the first time," Oladunni Segun, a leader of the Amilcar Cabral Ideological School Movement, told the *Militant* by phone from Lagos Oct. 18. "And they would protest all day."

Sheriff Sholagbade, also a leader of the group, told the *Militant* that the government's efforts to undercut the protests have failed, and they're "getting bigger and bigger." He said that they also provide an opportunity to discuss politics and what confronts working people in Nigeria today.

"Police will remain police," Segun said. "They are an institution of class repression for the capitalists. We need to see the bigger struggle beyond just police reform."

Before the Oct. 20 murderous assault, 10 protesters had been killed and dozens injured as the cops used tear gas, water cannons and live ammunition. Demonstrators are demanding justice for those killed, compensation for their families, immediate release of all those arrested and an independent body to investigate and prosecute police abuse.

The protests take place amid a deepening economic crisis and the continuing spread of coronavirus. The virus-related lockdowns on production and trade have had a big effect on the capitalist economy — the largest in Africa.

Nigeria is also the most populous country in Africa. Some 35% of Nigerians aged 15-34 are unemployed. More than half the country's 206 million people are estimated to live on less than $2 a day, and life expectancy is only 54 years. Inflation is rising and revenues from oil, the country's biggest natural resource, have plunged.

As of mid October, over 60,000 Nigerians had contracted COVID-19.

Nigerian immigrants and supporters have held actions in solidarity with the protests, including in Berlin, London, Toronto, New York, Atlanta, Houston, and Washington, D.C.

"Last week, they harassed me and my friends. They said they wanted to feast on us," 23-year-old Seun Gbadamosi told Al Jazeera at a rally in Ibadan. "This is why we protest. This is why we march. We want total disbandment."

On Oct. 15 the Nigerian army warned demonstrators — calling them "subversive elements and troublemakers" — that it would back the government "in whatever capacity to maintain law and order." The military has announced a nationwide armed exercise, called Operation Crocodile Smile, to take place from Oct. 20 to Dec. 31.

Reuters/Temilade Adelaja

Tens of thousands of workers and youth have demonstrated in October across Nigeria to demand government's repressive SARS police unit be dissolved. Above, Oct. 11 rally in Lagos.

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Are They Rich Because They're Smart?
Class, Privilege, and Learning under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes $5 WITH A SUBSCRIPTION

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Quebec meeting celebrates fight against 1970 War Measures Act

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — A special Militant Labor Forum organized here Oct. 17 celebrated the 50th anniversary of the accomplishments of the communist movement in helping lead the fight against the capitalist rulers' imposition of the War Measures Act. The speakers were Michel Prairie, a leader of the Communist League, and Paul Kouri, a supporter of the Communist League in Vancouver, both of whom were participants in that struggle. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had ordered martial law over Quebec province, using the pretext of terrorist kidnappings by the Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ).

Felix Vincent-Ardea, who chaired the meeting, told the 30 participants that members of the Communist League build on the lessons of that outstanding fight today. They are campaigning to get the *Militant* and Pathfinder books into the hands of working people and build solidarity with workers strikes and other struggles. In particular he pointed to the two-month-old strike in Newfoundland by 1,400 Dominion grocery store workers and a lockout of 700 at the Jean Coutu pharmacy warehouse near Montreal.

Michel Prairie explained that Canada's capitalist rulers used the kidnappings by the FLQ of James Cross, a British diplomat, and Pierre Laporte, a Quebec government minister, to invoke the War Measures Act on Oct. 16, 1970. Laporte was found dead the next day. The FLQ was a terrorist group that called for Quebec independence.

"Ottawa sent 8,000 soldiers to Quebec. Some 500 people were arrested without warrants and without any rights, including prominent trade union leaders, fighters for Quebec independence, socialists, well-known artists and others. The army carried out 31,000 raids," Prairie said.

"There have been tons of articles in the bourgeois media leading up to the anniversary, but what they don't mention is the breadth of the mass movement that was taking place at the time against the national oppression of the Quebecois," he explained. "This was interconnected with an important rise of workers' struggles, including initial steps by the unions toward independent labor political action. In Montreal this took the form of moves to found a labor party based on the unions called the Political Action Front or FRAP." The repression was aimed at these two interconnected struggles.

THE MILITANT

Canadian labor marches against Trudeau government

English Canadians, Québécois unite in protest

Militant coverage of Nov. 21, 1981, Ottawa rally of 100,000 workers. Working people in Quebec and across Canada defeated rulers' 1970 repression, spurring struggles for Quebec national rights, advancing united labor battles and helped build the communist movement in Canada.

History of uprisings, struggles

Revolutionary struggles broke out in Canada in 1837-38 against British colonial rule in which descendants of both the French and English settlers joined together in battle. The British rulers put these uprisings down in blood and then systematically worked to divide working people, imposing second-class status on those who spoke French.

By the 1960s Quebecois earned 35% less than English speakers. Signs in downtown Montreal, a city with a French majority, were all in English.

Through their struggles against national oppression, including the fight against the War Measures Act, Quebecois workers made growing gains and won real support from workers across Canada. The differences in wages no longer exist. The level of education is similar. French is the main language used in Quebec at work and in school. "Our class is much more united than it was before and the capitalists are not able to divide workers along national lines the way they once did," Prairie said.

The historical accomplishment overcoming divisions between Quebecois workers and those in the rest of Canada is an indispensable step toward building a mass movement of millions of working people that can fight to take political power and establish a workers and farmers government in Ottawa.

Rulers block labor party rise

In the spring of 1970, the three union federations in Quebec organized regional meetings to discuss launching a labor party. The alternative was the bourgeois nationalist Parti Quebecois (PQ), which had just been founded. In Montreal the union movement decided to support the FRAP. "This pointed the way forward toward building a mass labor party," Prairie said.

One meeting participant asked why no one talks about the FRAP today. "The union officialdom turned the movement toward the PQ," Prairie replied. "They don't talk about the FRAP because they consider it to be a bad example, a danger to their political perspective of keeping workers subservient to the capitalist parties."

The repression failed to stop the rise of workers' struggles across Canada. In 1972 a spontaneous general strike broke out across Quebec after three union leaders were jailed for refusing to obey a government order for 200,000 striking public workers to return to work. In 1976 there was a series of protest actions and strikes against wage controls that united workers in Quebec and the rest of the country, culminating in a one-day general strike of a million workers. In 1981 unions across Canada organized a mass protest of 100,000 workers against rising unemployment and inflation. Communists in Canada participated in many of these battles.

"These experiences enabled us to build a stronger party across Canada," Prairie said. In 1977, three revolutionary organizations came together to form the Revolutionary Workers League. In 1979, the RWL adopted the perspective of its members getting jobs in industry and taking part in union struggles there. "We celebrate tonight the publication in French of *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes," Prairie said. "This book contains the document adopted in 1979 by our world movement that gave us the party we are today."

When the FRAP decided to field candidates for most of the council seats in the Montreal election but not for mayor, the League for Socialist Action/La Ligue socialiste ouvrière (LSA/LSO), a predecessor of the Communist League, decided to run Manon Leger. At the center of Leger's mayoral campaign was building the working-class movement against the War Measures Act. As part of her campaign, she organized and joined supporters in distributing leaflets to the soldiers outside the downtown barracks of the Black Watch regiment. Leger and the campaigners were all arrested, but won their freedom and were acquitted.

Paul Kouri, who was a member of the Young Socialists and LSA/LSO in Saskatoon at the time, described the response outside of Quebec to the War Measures. "Our movement throughout Canada and the United States responded right away to this unprecedented assault on democratic rights. From day one, we reached out to other forces to hold rallies, demonstrations and teach-ins on the campuses.

"Through the pages of *Labor Challenge* and the *Young Socialist* magazine we exposed the lies of the Canadian government and featured the protests against the War Measures Act. The Socialist Workers Party did the same in the U.S." Shortly after the imposition of martial law, Mary-Alice Waters, managing editor of the *Militant*, came to Montreal to help cover the fight against the Canadian rulers' attacks.

Penny Simpson, a member of the Young Socialists and LSA/LSO in Montreal, was arrested and held for six days along with another leader of the group. Then she went on a cross-Canada tour in 12 cities, speaking on the working-class struggle in Quebec to audiences that ranged from 80 to 1,500. Others also toured to speak about the fight, including Michel Chartrand, a major Quebec union leader, who had been imprisoned as well. These tours helped counter efforts by the ruling class to slander and suppress any criticism of its action.

The response of the communist movement in fighting the repression by the capitalist state in 1970 was exemplary, Prairie said. "It is remarkable the number of those who participated in this fight 50 years ago who are still cadres of the communist movement. They were won for life."

French edition now available

The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party

"As workers begin organizing together, the measure of our success will be the experience and confidence we gain, our consciousness and readiness to stand up and be counted as part of a common class."

— Jack Barnes

$12. With *Militant* subscription, $8

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Fight against Florida prison ban on the 'Militant'

In response to a broad array of organizations and individuals speaking out, prison authorities in Florida recently ended a ban on several issues of the *Militant* that they had suppressed for reporting on unconstitutional impoundments of the paper. But they upheld their ban on *Militant* issue no. 31, because they disagree with the paper's political viewpoint in the article "Workers Oppose Federal Cops, Antifa Violence in Portland." At issue is an explicit violation of First Amendment protections of freedom of the press and the right of the *Militant*'s subscribers behind bars to read the paper and form their own opinions.

Keep getting letters of support from unions, churches, and defenders of workers' rights and free speech. Send to Dean Peterson, Literature Review Committee, Florida Department of Corrections, 501 South Calhoun St., Tallahassee, FL 32399, or email to Allen.Peterson@fdc.myflorida.com, with copies to themilitant@mac.com

Send a check to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, earmarked "Prisoners Rights Fight."

Organizing the South remains a key challenge before labor

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October is Labor's Giant Step — The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55 *by Art Preis. Preis, a participant in labor battles in the 1930s, became a staff writer for the* Militant. *His book deals with the great upheavals of the class struggle that built stronger industrial unions in the U.S. This excerpt describes how the CIO officialdom failed to seize the openings to build unions in the South by organizing all workers, Black and Caucasian alike. Despite the social revolution of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and '70s overturning Jim Crow segregation, this failure has left a lasting legacy of a weaker labor movement in the country.* *Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Militant/Jon Hillson

Steelworkers Local 8888 victory demonstration at Newport News, Virginia, shipyard in 1979. Drive led by Black workers to organize 18,000 there showed possibilities for organizing South.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ART PREIS

Even more appalling has been the record of the official labor bureaucracy on the organization of the South, the most formidable citadel of both the anti-Negro and anti-union elements in the country. The open-shop South, with its low living standards and cheap labor supply, has been for decades the chief haven for runaway plants from the North, particularly in the textile industry. During the late 1920's the old AFL had launched a special campaign to organize the South.

Twenty years later [George] Baldanzi [executive vice president of the Textile Workers Union] blamed the failure of the CIO in this area on the Communist Party which, during its early period, had made the greatest sacrifices and most heroic efforts to help organize the Southern textile and agricultural workers.

The question of the organization of the South, which looms with especial magnitude because of the great Negro upsurge of the past decade, touches on some of the gravest weaknesses in the policies and methods of the American labor bureaucracy.

The CIO in its rise represented a great step forward in many spheres, including that of racial integration. It was founded on the principle of no discrimination. All forms of the color line were constitutionally banned from all CIO affiliates and from the national CIO. This was a far cry from the traditional situation in the AFL and railroad brotherhoods. As late as the AFL-CIO merger in 1955, there were still some thirty AFL international unions with constitutional color bars and restrictions.

At its peak membership of six million, the CIO included a half million Negro workers. They were a significant force in such major unions as steel, automobile and packinghouse. At the 1947 convention of the CIO packinghouse workers, one-third of all the delegates were Negroes. This does not mean that Negro workers achieved equality with all other workers in the CIO-organized industries or even were accorded their proper representation in the unions. The CIO did a little to change the discriminating corporation pattern in the hiring and upgrading of the Negro, but he remained the last hired and the first fired, and was restricted to the hardest, dirtiest and lowest-paid work. The CIO did give him, where he was able to enter basic industries, union status and a measure of union protection. In return, the Negro worker gave the CIO unbounded loyalty and fighting support.

Just before Pearl Harbor, at the 1941 CIO convention, a campaign was initiated to organize the South. This campaign was to be, in [President] Philip Murray's words, the CIO's "Task Number One." The CIO leadership, which included the Stalinists, abandoned this number one task during the whole of World War II, just as they sacrificed the general interests of labor to the demands of the capitalist war machine.

During the war, the insistent demand of the Negro workers for jobs in the better-paying war industries and for an end to segregation in housing and education led to the establishment in 1944 of the CIO Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination. Between March 15 and August 15, state and local committees had increased from 50 to 85, with organizations even in Georgia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, Texas, Kansas and Alabama. They succeeded in winning a number of cases involving such issues as job upgrading and integrated government housing. But this CIO activity did not touch at the core of the problem. The vast Southland remained generally unorganized and constantly fed the springs of anti-Negro and anti-labor poison throughout the country. In the South, the issues of civil rights and labor rights fused.

In May 1946, the CIO opened what was announced as its greatest organizing campaign since the 1936-37 founding drive — a campaign called "Operation Dixie." This phrase indicated a grand offensive to be run with the power, precision and organization of a military drive. Murray called it a "crusade" to mobilize not less than one million Southern workers into the CIO within a year. To this end the national CIO sent 400 organizers to key selected points in the South and placed a million-dollar fund at their disposal.

On the occasion of the opening of "Operation Dixie," I wrote in the May 4, 1946 *Militant* an estimation of the scope of the task and what was required to carry it out successfully: "United organization of the cruelly exploited Southern Negro and white workers would constitute the first great advance in what inevitably must develop into a social, economic and political struggle aimed at a profound transformation of the entire South. … Anyone acquainted with the Southern scene recognizes that a real drive to bring the white and Negro workers together will be resisted with all the ferocity and violence that the Southern ruling class can muster. … Any policy that … seeks to confine itself to the most narrow trade-union aims or tries to adapt itself … to the prejudices of the Southern system can only hamper and weaken 'Operation Dixie.'" …

The reason for the failure of "Operation Dixie" was not the Stalinists. Their contribution to its failure had been the same as that of the official CIO bureaucracy. It was impossible to support the Democratic Party and not reinforce its Southern wing, the chief political prop of the Jim Crow system and one-party dictatorship in the South. The CIO leaders refused to wage political war against the Southern ruling class because that would undermine the whole Democratic Party and put an end to the Democratic Party-labor coalition. The Stalinists had supported that policy and had reinforced the leadership in its bankrupt political course.

October BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55
by Art Preis
The rise of industrial unions in the 1930s transformed the labor movement in the United States.
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The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87
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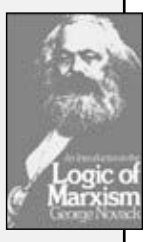

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ALYSON KENNEDY

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

For shorter workweek, no cut in pay

MALCOLM JARRETT

Continued from front page

crisis caused by the dog-eat-dog capitalist system becomes more evident as joblessness mounts, lines expand at food banks and millions of workers face a for-profit health industry incapable of providing the medical care we need as a deadly pandemic continues.

Both President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden say they're the best candidate to look after "our" problems. But there is no "we." They are both loyal servants of a capitalist class that is determined to reverse its declining profit rates at our expense, while working people can only protect ourselves by organizing together to stand up to the growing attack by the bosses and their government.

Neither the Democrats nor Republicans offer proposals to create the tens of millions of jobs that workers need today above all. Nor do they have proposals to make the successful drug cocktail given to Trump available *now* to all those who get COVID-19.

The Socialist Workers Party campaign offers a road forward to build a working-class movement of millions to challenge the rule of the exploitative capitalist class. We urge workers and our unions to fight for a shorter workweek with *no cut in weekly take-home pay* to spread available work around and stop layoffs. For a government-funded public works program to create jobs at union-scale pay, to build hospitals, housing, schools, and many other things workers need.

We say working people can only rely on ourselves. In the course of our struggles we will build a fighting union movement and transform ourselves, becoming more self-confident and class conscious.

Working people need to fight for what we *need*, not what the bosses and their parties say is "possible." We need to speak out in the interests of working farmers, who face debt slavery and ruin in rising numbers, and to rally all those exploited and oppressed by capital.

To advance these fights, workers need our own political party, a labor party based on a fighting union movement, to organize working people to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class and replace their rule with a workers and farmers government.

The revolution made by working people in Cuba, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, provides a powerful example of what our class can do. Wielding our own government, we have the strongest possible tool in fighting to rid the world of racism, women's oppression and all the inequities the capitalists make use of.

When the coronavirus hit Cuba, the revolutionary government organized students and other volunteers in their thousands to carry out daily house visits, especially to the elderly, to see if they needed care. In contrast to capitalist governments around the world, everyone in Cuba who got sick received immediate medical attention, free of charge. No one is left on their own, and everyone gets the best they have to offer. Cuba has the lowest COVID-19 death rate in the world.

The U.S. rulers fear the formidable example provided by Cuba's socialist revolution. Both Biden and Trump promote the U.S. rulers' economic war on the Cuban people, to punish them for setting an example that it is possible for working people to replace capitalist rule with something that is better.

Join us campaigning for the SWP, the only party that offers a revolutionary way forward. Help expand the circulation of the *Militant*. Look forward to continuing to build a fighting working-class movement after Nov. 3.

Bosses drive to make workers pay for crisis

Continued from front page

be part of the active working class and its struggles."

On Oct. 13, Maersk, the largest container ship and supply-vessel operator in the world, said it's eliminating at least 2,000 jobs. They join growing layoffs enforced by an array of company bosses, including those at United and American airlines; Royal Dutch Shell, BP and Chevron oil companies; AT&T's WarnerMedia; Walt Disney theme parks; and many more. Auto production has fallen 8.3% over the past two months.

Rather than hiring more workers, bosses are pushing those on the job to work more hours, in more dangerous conditions, to maximize profits.

The number of people filing first time state unemployment claims rose to a two-month high of 898,000 a week as of Oct. 10. Together with federal programs set up to help self-employed, gig and other workers not eligible for regular unemployment, a total of 25.3 million people were claiming benefits as of Sept. 26.

And this doesn't include millions more who haven't been able to navigate the red tape to file or aren't eligible because they're immigrant workers without papers, or who work part time.

Long-term unemployed

Some 3.8 million people permanently lost their jobs in September. Yet during the three weeks ending Oct. 3, some 2.7 million people were cut off from state unemployment benefits, most because they've been out of work for over six months.

The employment-to-population ratio, which measures the number of people employed against the total working-age population, most accurately shows the depth of the jobless crisis. It was 61.1% in February, but just 56.6% in September.

The $600 weekly federal unemployment benefit that lasted until the end of July helped many workers put food on the table for several months. But once it ended many of these workers found themselves in dire straits, and the average checking account balance in the U.S. plummeted by 74%.

Lateisha Willett, of Davenport, Iowa, was let go in mid-March from the call center where she worked. After the $600 a week federal payment ended, she was left with only a weekly state benefit of $90, and $3 more for her 2-year-old son. She unsuccessfully applied for 30 jobs. "I'm afraid I'll be evicted," she told the *Wall Street Journal*. "And that will open another door to hell and chaos for me."

It took until Sept. 1 for the federal government to order a suspension of evictions, but even then it allows landlords to begin the process during the moratorium, so workers will be on the streets more quickly when the moratorium ends in January. By then an estimated 8 million tenants may face eviction.

Rising energy, medical costs

Overwhelmed by surging demand for food, some food banks in New York City have imposed an appointment-only setup, with scheduling to be made through a computer app. If you don't have a computer, or an internet connection, you're out of luck. Computers thousands of workers depended on in public libraries are not available. Those without appointments now wait outside to beg for donations from those leaving the pantry with their carts full.

Natural gas prices are expected to rise 6% and electricity by 7% according to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association. Family health insurance premiums for lower paid workers have nearly quadrupled to $20,576 per year over the past two decades.

Having an insurance policy is no guarantee working people receive treatment. Several large Southern California hospital systems turned away or delayed treatment to critically sick COVID-19 patients when officials prioritized confirming whether hospital owners would get payments from the patients' insurers.

Social Security administrators announced Oct. 13 that benefits for next year will rise just 1.3%, a measly $19 average monthly increase. "Social Security recipients have lost about 20% of their buying power since 2009," Mary Johnson from the Senior Citizens League told Marketwatch.

As winter approaches moratoriums blocking utility cutoffs expired Oct. 14 in 18 states, and end in 18 others Dec. 31.

Protests in Belarus

Continued from front page

chanted, "The workers are with the people!" "Strike!" and "You and your riot police get out!"

This is in response to a "people's ultimatum" issued from exile in neighboring Lithuania by opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya Oct. 13. She set an Oct. 25 deadline for Lukashenko to resign, for an end to cop violence and for the release of all political prisoners — otherwise, there would be "a full national strike" to paralyze the country.

Tsikhanouskaya, a former teacher, is the opposition candidate widely believed to have won the elections. She stood after her husband, Syarhei Tsikhanousky, a journalist who had covered the growing social crisis in the country, was imprisoned to prevent him from running. Amid an economic crisis sharpened by the withdrawal of subsidies on gas imported from Russia, working people seized on the opportunity to vote to rid themselves of 26 years of Lukashenko's increasingly iron-fisted rule and gain broader political rights.

The regime has responded to the mass protests and strike actions in many of the country's largest factories and mines with repression, killing seven people, disappearing dozens and torturing hundreds.

"Although we are not naive, we understand now that 'the authorities have no bottom,' as we say in Russian. It means they don't have any ethical scruples," Hanna Varsotskaya, a protest activist in Minsk, told the *Militant* in an Oct. 18 email. "Belarusians have read a lot about the experience of other countries. The story goes that violence won't help them."

Call for general strike

Two months after an initial wave of protest strikes by factory workers and miners pushed back the regime's thugs, the stakes are higher this time with the opposition call for industrial workers to respond with a general strike.

Vitaly Dyadyuk, a member of the strike committee at the state-owned Belaruskali potash mines and processing plant, sent a message Oct. 18 to the *Militant*. In response to the protests and beating of demonstrators after the election, thousands of miners walked out. Then a combination of arrests of strike leaders and threats that miners will lose their jobs has led most miners to return to work, he said, where they have continued to fight boss attacks. Strike committee leaders continue to face frame-up prosecutions.

The Belaruskali complex produces a third of the country's economic output, Dyadyuk said. "That's why the government especially oppresses the strikers. They want to scare others who think to join the strike." But he noted that there are work-to-rule actions, "an 'Italian strike,' in many places in the mining complex. The production figures have dropped significantly."

On the call for a national strike on Oct. 26, Dyadyuk said, "Nobody expects that Lukashenko will leave the office by this date. So workers and protesters need to mobilize their resources."

International working-class solidarity

Dyadyuk concluded with an appeal for unionists around the world to send messages of support to the Belaruskali strikers. He asked the *Militant* to get the word out and relay any expressions of solidarity they receive.

Lukashenko has now either imprisoned or exiled the leaders of the opposition Coordination Council, including Svetlana Alexievich, the well-known and prize-winning author of *Voices from Chernobyl*. She is in Germany for medical treatment, but says she plans to return to Belarus.

The last member who was at large, Siarhei Dyleuski, leader of the strike committee at the huge MTZ Tractor Works in Minsk, was forced into exile Oct. 12. He had previously been detained and then released. The management at MTZ forced him to leave his job of 12 years by threatening to fire his parents, who also work there. He and his family left for Poland after agents of the KGB, the secret police, threatened further moves against them.

Workers solidarity with the popular struggle is spreading abroad. Lufthansa Technik maintenance workers at Hamburg airport in Germany refused to service Lukashenko's plane when it landed there Oct. 14. Their union issued a statement saying they had a "long tradition of international solidarity and stand side by side with Belarusian workers."